C. The Kirghiz

563 1. The people

Taking Tien-shan as a whole, the Kirghiz form the leading [771] element of the population. They are Mohammedans of the Suni order, but they are not strict followers of their religion. Their [642] system of government is patriarchal, control of the different [622] sections being vested in tribal elders who enjoy almost unlimited authority. The elders (Manap) are chosen by the people, and regarded with honor and respect.

[233] The people are nomads whose main occupation is cattle rais- [241] ing. Only a small proportion of the population engages in farming.

563 2. Patterns of living

342 a. Dwelling

The Kirghiz do not live in houses. The poor live in shelters [184] made of branches under trees or against overhanging rocks. The rich live in tents, smaller and less ornate than the Mongolian yurt but more solid with thick layers of felt. A light tent is called an aq-ai. It stands a gale very well, as the shape is such that a high wind presses the structure even more firmly to the ground. To make it more stable, a large stone is placed in the tent and the woodwork of the roof is anchored to it by a rope.

The shape and structure of an aq-ai are similar to those of [354] the Mongolian yurt, but the interior arrangement differs. A fire always burns cheerily in the middle and a cauldron of mash [353] simmers upon it. At the far end is the kitchen, which is screened by gaily colored mats of reeds tightly wound with dyed wool. [251] Here the housewife stores her milk, cream and curds in vast wooden bowls. When the weather is wet, a row of young lambs [231] occupies one corner of the tent. They are tethered closely to a rope pegged down along the walls. Saddlebags, sieves, hats, [353] wool, coats, skins and so forth are hung along the tent walls. Piles of rolled-up felts and rugs occupy about a quarter of the circumference of the tent. The wealth of the owner may be guessed from the size of the piles.

563 The interior decoration in the tent of a wealthy Kirghiz is 342 often artistic. The walls are hung with embroideries made by 352 the women, and the ground is covered with carpets. There are 353 also pillows covered with multi-colored chintz of Chinese or Russian manufacture. Furniture is not generally used. There is [415] an occasional table, a few copper pots and pans, and some brass jugs used for boiling water and making tea.

563 b. Food

262 Staple foods for the Kirghiz are barley, bread, milk and its 252 products, such as sour cream and qurut, a kind of cheese. In most tents there are cauldrons of brewing mash, a mixture of flour and milk. Qurut is made by drying sour cream in goatskin.

/The New Uighurs/

563 songs of poverty and exile, and popular songs of various kinds.
[533] The New Uighurs are great believers in the efficacy of local
[796] saints, and there are innumerable shrines all over their region
[798] dedicated to saints and heroes.

2. Patterns of living

563 a. Dwelling

342 Most of the people live in small hud houses called öy, or
[184] sometimes hānä, which resemble the simple earth, stone and reed-mat homes of the poor farmers of North China. Rich people live in well-built houses with courtyards and gardens.

The typical design of the house is a flat roof upon which small openings are left to serve as windows. The windowframes are equipped with folding shutters, and are closed at night during the winter. [354] The window openings are so small they admit little light, and the interior is always in semi-darkness. Floor [352] and walls are packed with reed mats and earth. The rear of the room is set apart by a partition of squared beams, and has a raised floor. This elevated section, its floor covered with reed mats and thick felt, serves as the bed and also the dining table. Most of the family's time at home is spent on this elevation. The door of the house is so low that one must bend down to pass through it. Almost every room has a chimney.

The flat-topped roof of the house is used for drying grain and [251] other agricultural products. Each house also has a veranda on [352] which plank beds are constructed for use during the summer. Couches of wood or clay under the trees also serve as sleeping accommodations during hot weather. A house with a courtyard [351] is surrounded by a wall of earth. In the southern area, the gar- [184] dens of the homes are surrounded by hedges.

b. Food

563 Wheat and corn are the staple foods of the people. Rice is a
262 luxury used only for entertaining and festival occasions. Meat is preferred to vegetables, and mutton to beef. Chickens, ducks and other fowl are eaten, but not considered especially desirable. The famous Turfan raisins and Hami (Qomul) melons supply large quantities of fresh fruits for these people. Mare's milk [292] is drunk extensively, and the noble drink called kumis, horse [293] milk wine, is considered the most healthful of all sour milk concoctions.

563 For entertaining, camel and horse meat, beef and mutton are
262 served with fresh fruits, crystalized sugar and kumis. Meats
252 may be boiled or roasted. The most common dishes are grilled mutton and kidney, and cold boiled mutton and liver with bread. The favorite dish, called pilav, is made of the fattest mutton or beef cut into small pieces and cooked with rice, chopped carrot, onion, garlic and seedless raisins, cooked in a large cauldron. [264] Liquid foods are eaten with wooden spoons. Other foods, including thick porridge and pilav, are eaten with the fingers.

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
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be a Qazaq. She wore a printed cotton gown to her ankles, and over it a striped coat, cut with an old-fashioned waistline, and down the back seam the stripes met in fishbone pattern, while her head and face were swathed in the nunlike headgear worn by all Qazaq women. A call from our driver brought an acquiescing response from her, and he drew up as she now moved toward the great mound of drying cow-dung, which is the inevitable adjunct to the Qazaq home. Her fireplace was of the simplest, a deep hole hollowed in the ground, and three iron rods and a hook, from which a kettle hung. She dexterously placed the cakes of cow dung on the embers, and blowing on them, in a short time there was a glowing fire and a singing kettle. One of her children was seen carrying water from the spring, while the other was collecting fuel, but both now came running to see us. Accepting her invitation we entered the tent, and here found her husband, a Honan man, lying down with the hateful opium pipe by his side. Nevertheless, with the manners of a gentleman, he at once rose, spread a carpet for us, and with a gesture placed his pipe at our disposal, but adding as he did so: 'You have none of these bad habits in your country.' We sat and talked with this intelligent man, who for some unknown reason had left China, wandered across the desert, and thrown in his lot with the Qazaq people, taking one of their women to be his wife and the mother of his children. Another of these enigmatic people gathered in this strangest of countries, where a man's past is known only to himself, to be buried and forgotten.

While we were talking Sandy Macnab was working. Producing a length of cotton material, of suitable size and shape to fit between the shafts of his cart, he proceeded to fasten it so as to form a feeding trough, in